

RELAXING INSECTS. — I was much interested to read the note by P. J. Johnson (*Ent. Rec.*, 92:49) on this subject. I recollect reading elsewhere of the use of spirit as a relaxing agent but cannot at the moment recall the reference.

However the point on which I wish to comment concerns the prevention of mould. In my early days of collecting this presented a real and annoying problem when relaxing insects. I recollect that the addition of phenol was supposed to prevent mould in relaxing boxes. This I recall was not very effective. In the last few years I have developed a method which seems to prevent mould occurring in the relaxing box.

For purposes of relaxing insects, and I refer mainly to lepidoptera, I use a plastic box of suitable size with a more or less air-tight lid. In the bottom of the box is placed a thick layer of folded white lint. The charge consists mainly of water but to it is added about 25 ml of a super-saturated solution of Chlorocresol. (This is made up by adding chlorocresol to warm water until there is an excess of undissolved chemical.)

I found an old relaxing box recently, treated in this way over two years ago and containing a few butterflies which had not been set. Though the butterflies were completely water-logged there was no trace of mould whatever.

Chlorocresol is obtainable from the chemist's shop and while not very cheap a 100 gm bottle will charge many relaxing boxes. Once the relaxing boxes are charged it is only necessary from time to time to add a little more water as required — the chlorocresol remains for a long time. — Dr. NEVILLE L. BIRKETT, Kendal Wood, New Hutton, Cumbria LA8 0AQ.

SURGICAL SPIRIT AS A RELAXING AGENT. — With reference to Mr. Johnson's note under this heading (1980, *Ent. Rec.*, 92: 49), ordinary methylated spirits are equally suitable as a relaxing agent. I first drew attention to this in 1929 (*Entomologist*, 62:284), and repeated it in 1953 (*Ent. Rec.*, 65: 197). One point that Mr. Johnson does not mention is the rapidity with which spirit-relaxed specimens dry out; this results in great economies in the use of setting boards. — D. G. SEVASTOPULO, F.R.E.S., P.O. Box 95617, Mombasa (Nyali).

AQUATIC INSECTS. — Investigating a water-filled sandpit at Stone, Buckinghamshire, recently, some young companions and I discovered a variety of interesting insects. On 6th April, for example, 15-year old Ralph Woodward fished out an evil-smelling wooden post, within a fissure of which was the full-grown nymph of an Aeshnid dragonfly. In the same post were a large number of caddis larvae (*Phryganea* sp.), with black and yellow striped head and thorax. Later, in captivity, the Aeshna nymph seized and partially devoured one of the caddis, although the remainder of the latter were quite prepared to